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August Jottings from June

Peace, I Say to You

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (John 14:27)

I thank you for your prayers and kind communications during this difficult few months in my life. General Synod this year was hard for me as we presented the resolution in response to the shooting at Mother Emmanuel AME Church. I had never written a resolution before and to have to present a powerful and compelling document in the midst of my own grief and prayers for friends who had family members killed took a lot of spiritual and emotional energy. I am so grateful for the spiritual strength of Rev. Jeremy Rutledge, pastor of Circular Congregational Church in Charleston as he represented that community in the midst of his own grief and need to be present as a pastor to his local community.

My vacation was resolving some contractor and permit issues with my house in California, the committal of my mother's ashes at sea, being with my father who could not travel for the committal of ashes, and the resolution of a difficult legal case involving one of my sons. It has not been a peaceful few weeks.

I think the whole world is in need of peace. I have been overwhelmed with black lives that did not matter and cannot fathom how the list grows longer seemingly every week. My heart is troubled and I don't know how to respond. I have been working with UCC and ecumenical partners to respond to the church burnings in South Carolina and other places in the South. Whether it is indeed arson or from other causes, the loss of a sacred place is heartbreaking and each report renews our fears and our uneasiness.

And matters of women clergy have occupied my heart and mind as I read about black female pastors being threatened. This in the midst of being involved in two national UCC initiatives that are looking to develop diverse leadership for local churches and especially for wider settings of the church such as Conference and National ministry. I am weary of fighting the gender battle and proving each day that I as good as the next person despite my racial ethnic heritage.

But as I reflect on my weariness and my heartache and my continued call to ministry, I know that I am in the place I am meant to be. I know that I am the voice that is called to proclaim God's peace and Christ's call to serve the world. I know that I am equipped for all that I am called to do and surrounded by a community of care and accountability that will journey with me as we seek to establish God's realm on earth.

O Lord, you will ordain peace for us, for indeed, all that we have done, you have done for us. (Isaiah 26:12)

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